

PATENT

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.: 051252-5028

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
BOX PATENT APPLICATION
Washington, D.C. 20231

**TRANSMITTAL FOR A NEWLY EXECUTED ORIGINAL APPLICATION
UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.53(b)**

This is a request for filing a patent application under 37 C.F.R. §1.53(b) for:

Inventor: William James IMOEHL

For: FUEL INJECTOR WITH THERMALLY ISOLATED SEAT

1. This is a new ☒ **Utility** ☐ **Design** ☐ **Plant** patent application.
2. The papers enclosed to obtain a filing date are as follows:

<u>12</u>	Pages of Specification including
<u>0</u>	Title Page
<u>4</u>	Pages of Claims
<u>1</u>	Page of Abstract
<u>2</u>	Sheets of drawings containing <u>2</u> Figures

☐ The enclosed drawing(s) are photograph(s), and there is also attached a
PETITION TO ACCEPT PHOTOGRAPH(S) AS DRAWING(S)
3. Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney

<input type="checkbox"/>	Enclosed and is executed by all inventors.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Enclosed.

This application is being filed under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.53(f).
Applicant(s) await notification from the Patent and Trademark Office of the time
set for filing the Declaration and paying the filing fees.

4. Language

☒ English☐ Non-English

This application is being filed in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.52(d) and §608.01 of the MPEP. Applicant(s) await notification from the Patent and Trademark Office of the time set for filing the verified English translation and the processing fee.

5. Assignment

☐ An assignment of the invention to _____ and a PTO Form-1595, Recordation Form Cover Sheet, are enclosed.

☒ An assignment will be filed at a later date.

6. Priority - foreign applications under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d) or §365(b) or PCT international applications under 35 U.S.C. §365(a) designating at least one country other than the U.S.

☐ Priority of the following foreign application(s) is claimed:

Country	Application No.	Filed

Certified copy(ies): ☐ is/are attached. ☐ will follow.

7. Priority based on provisional application(s) - 35 U.S.C. §119(e)

☐ Priority of the following provisional application(s) is claimed:

Application No.	Filed

A. Relate Back - 35 U.S.C. §119(e)

- ☐ Amend the specification by inserting before the first line the sentence:
 "This application claims priority of copending provisional application(s)
 No. _____ filed on _____."

8. Small entity status

- ☐ A statement claiming small entity status under 37 C.F.R. §§1.9 and 1.27 is enclosed.

9. Fee Calculation (37 C.F.R. §1.16)

CLAIMS FOR FEE CALCULATION				
	Number Filed	Number Extra	at Rate of	Basic Fee Utility \$690.00 Design \$310.00
Total Claims (37 C.F.R. §1.16(c))	17- 20 =	0	\$ 18.00 each=	\$0.00
Independent Claims (37 C.F.R. §1.16(b))	3 - 3 =	0	\$ 78.00 each=	\$0.00
Multiple dependent claim(s), if any (37 C.F.R. §1.16(d))			\$260.00	+
SUB-TOTAL =				\$690.00
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by a small entity				- \$
TOTAL FILING FEE =				\$690.00

10. Fee Payment

- ☒ Not Enclosed. **NO FEE IS BEING PAID BY CHECK OR DEPOSIT ACCOUNT AT THIS TIME.**

This application is being filed under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.53(f).
 Applicant(s) await notification from the Patent and Trademark Office of the time
 set for filing the Declaration and paying the filing fees.

[] Enclosed.

Two checks in the amounts of \$_____ and \$40.00 representing the basic filing fee of \$760.00 (and addition claim fees of \$**) and an assignment recording fee of \$40.00 is enclosed.

11. [X] **Except** for issue fees payable under 37 C.F.R. §1.18, the Commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the entire pendency of this application including fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 50-0310. This paragraph is intended to be a **CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME** in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a)(3).

12. Additional papers enclosed:

- [] Preliminary Amendment
- [] Information Disclosure Statement
- [] Form PTO-1449, _____ documents included
- [] Declaration of Biological Deposit
- [] Submission of "Sequence Listing", computer readable copy and/or amendment pertaining thereto for biotechnology invention containing nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence.

Please accord this application an application number and filing date.

Respectfully submitted,

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP



Scott J. Anshell

Reg. No. 35,035

Dated: December 30, 1999

Customer No. 009629

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

1800 M Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20036

(202) 467-7000

FUEL INJECTOR WITH THERMALLY ISOLATED SEAT

Background of Invention

This invention relates to a fuel injector assembly, and more particularly to a high-pressure direct injection fuel injector assembly having a seat that is thermally isolated from a body exposed to extreme temperatures within an engine cylinder.

Experimental testing has shown that the extreme temperatures within an engine cylinder can effect the operative performance characteristics of the fuel injector assembly. First, the excessive temperatures of the engine cylinder can disproportionately distort the components of the fuel injector assembly within the engine cylinder. For example, the body, which is preferably metal, can be distorted an unequal quantity relative to a needle disposed within the body. Distorting of the components of the fuel injector disproportionally can, for example, alter the dimensional tolerances between the components of the fuel injector, i.e., the body, the needle, and the seat, which is believed, under certain operative conditions, to render the fuel injector inoperative. Second, the excess temperatures of the engine cylinder can cause the fuel injector to overheat and coke unburned fuel on the components of the fuel injector, i.e., the tip components of the fuel injector, such as, the seat at an outlet portion of the body. Coking of the fuel injector tip components can block the outlet of the fuel injector, which is believed to affect the fuel spray patterns of the fuel injector. Thus, distorting and coking of the fuel injector components utilized in a direct inject application is believed to diminish the performance capability of the fuel injector. A seat that is thermally isolated from a body of a fuel injector assembly, it is believed, will substantially avoid the above-discussed problems. Thus, an arrangement of a fuel injector assembly where the seat is substantially thermally isolated from the body (i.e.- the contact area between the seat and the body is minimized) is desirable.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides a fuel injector having a fuel inlet, a fuel outlet, and a fuel passageway extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet along a longitudinal axis, the

fuel injector including a body, an armature adjacent the inlet portion of the body having an inlet portion, an outlet portion, and a neck portion disposed between the inlet portion and the outlet portion, a needle operatively connected to the armature, a seat proximate the needle, and a seal. The seat has a first face, a second face, and a circumferential surface disposed
5 between the first face and the second face, the circumferential surface including a first zone and a second zone that are connected by an intermediate zone, the intermediate zone engaging the body. The seal is disposed between the second zone of the seat and the body that thermally isolates the second zone of the seat from the body.

The present invention also provides a body and a seat for a fuel injector having a fuel
10 inlet, a fuel outlet, and a fuel passageway extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet along a longitudinal axis. The body includes an inlet portion, an outlet portion, and a neck portion disposed between the inlet portion and the outlet portion. The seat includes a first face, a second face, and an circumferential surface disposed between the first face and the second face, the circumferential surface including a first zone and a second zone that are connected
15 by an intermediate zone, the intermediate zone engaging the body and the second zone being thermally isolated from the body.

The present invention also provides a method of forming a fuel injector having a fuel
inlet, a fuel outlet, a fuel passageway extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet along a longitudinal axis, a body, and a seat. The body has an inlet portion, an outlet portion, and a
20 neck portion disposed between the inlet portion and the outlet portion. The seat has a first face, a second face, and a circumferential surface disposed between the first face and the second face, the circumferential surface including a first zone and a second zone that are connected by an intermediate zone. The method includes the steps of engaging the intermediate zone of the seat with the body, and thermally isolating the second zone of the
25 seat from the body.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated herein and constitute part of this specification, illustrate presently preferred embodiments of the invention, and, together with

the general description given above and the detailed description given below, serve to explain features of the invention.

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional view of a fuel injector assembly of the present invention taken along its longitudinal axis;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged portion of the cross-sectional view of the fuel injector assembly shown in FIG. 1, which illustrates the thermally isolated seat of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment(s)

FIG.1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of the fuel injector assembly 10, in particular a high-pressure, direct-injection fuel injector assembly 10. The fuel injector assembly 10 has a housing, which includes a fuel inlet 12, a fuel outlet 14, and a fuel passageway 16 extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet 14 along a longitudinal axis 18. The housing includes an overmolded plastic member 20 cincturing a metallic support member 22.

A fuel inlet member 24 with an inlet passage 26 is disposed within the overmolded plastic member 20. The inlet passage 26 serves as part of the fuel passageway 16 of the fuel injector assembly 10. A fuel filter 28 and an adjustable tube 30 are provided in the inlet passage 26. The adjustable tube 30 is position-able along the longitudinal axis 18 before being secured in place to vary the length of an armature bias spring 32, which control the quantity of fluid flow within the injector. The overmolded plastic member 20 also supports a socket that receives a plug (not shown) to operatively connect the fuel injector assembly 10 to an external source of electrical potential, such as an electronic control unit ECU (not shown). An elastomeric O-ring 34 is provided in a groove on an exterior extension of the inlet member. The O-ring 34 is biased by a flat spring 38 to sealingly secure the inlet source with a fuel supply member, such as a fuel rail (not shown).

The metallic support member 22 encloses a coil assembly 40. The coil assembly 40 includes a bobbin 42 that retains a coil 44. The ends of the coil assembly 40 are operatively connected to the socket through the overmolded plastic member 20. An armature 46 is axially aligned with the inlet member by structure to define a spacer 48 therein, a body shell

50, and a body 52. The armature 46 has an armature passage 54 aligned along the longitudinal axis 18 with the inlet passage 26 of the inlet member.

The spacer 48 engages the body 52, which is partially disposed within the body shell 50. An armature guide eyelet 56 is located on an inlet portion of a body 60. An axially extending body passage 58 connects the inlet portion of the body 60 with an outlet portion of the body 62. The armature passage 54 of the armature 46 is axial aligned with the body passage 58 of the body 52 along the longitudinal axis 18. A seat 64, which is preferably a metallic material, is located at the outlet portion of the body 62.

The body 52 has a neck portion 66, which is, preferably, a cylindrical annulus that surrounds a needle 68. The needle 68 is operatively connected to the armature 46, and is, preferably, a substantially cylindrical needle 68. The cylindrical needle 68 is centrally located within the cylindrical annulus. The cylindrical needle 68 is axially aligned with the longitudinal axis 18 of the fuel injector assembly 10.

Operative performance of the fuel injector assembly 10 is achieved by magnetically coupling the armature 46 to the inlet member near the inlet portion of the body 60. A portion of the inlet member proximate the armature 46 serves as part of the magnetic circuit formed with the armature 46 and coil assembly 40. The armature 46 is guided by the armature guide eyelet 56 and is responsive to an electromagnetic force generated by the coil assembly 40 for axially reciprocating the armature 46 along the longitudinal axis 18 of the fuel injector assembly 10. The electromagnetic force is generated by current flow from the ECU (not shown) through the coil assembly 40. Movement of the armature 46 also moves the operatively attached needle 68. The needle 68 engages the seat 64, which opens and closes the seat passage 70 of the seat 64 to permit or inhibit, respectively, fuel from exiting the fuel outlet 14 of the fuel injector 10. The needle 68 includes a curved surface 78, which is preferably a spherical surface, that mates with a conical end 80 of a funnel 82 that serves as the preferred seat passage 70 of the seat 64.

A swirl generator 76 is located in the body passage 58 proximate the seat 64. The swirl generator 76 allows the fuel to form a swirl pattern on the seat 64. In particular, for example, the fuel is swirled on the conical end 72 of the funnel 74 in order to produce a

desired spray pattern. The swirl generator 76, preferably, is constructed from a pair of flat disks, a guide disk 78 and a swirl disk 80. The swirl generator 76 defines a contact area between the seat and the body 52. The guide disk 78 provides a support for the needle 68.

The needle 68 is guided in a central aperture 82 of the guide disk 78. The guide disk 78 has a plurality of fuel passage openings that supply fuel from the body passage 58 to the swirl disk 80. The swirl disk 80 directs fuel from the fuel passage openings in the guide disk 78 and meters the flow of fuel tangentially toward the seat passage 70 of the seat 64. The guide disk 78 and swirl disks 80 that form the swirl generator 76 are secured to a first surface 84 of the seat 64, preferably, by laser welding. During operation, fuel flows in fluid communication from the fuel inlet source (not shown) through the inlet passage 26 of the inlet member, the armature passage 54 of the armature 46, the body passage 58 of the body 52, the guide disk 78 and the swirl disk 80 of the swirl generator 76, and the seat passage 70 of the seat 64.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the fuel injector assembly shown in FIG. 1, which illustrates the thermally isolated seat of the present invention. The seat 64 includes a first face 602, a second face 604, and a circumferential surface 606 disposed between the first face 602 and the second face 604. The circumferential surface 606 includes a first zone 616 and a second zone 626. An annular intermediate zone 636 extends between and connects the first zone 616 to the second zone 626. The intermediate zone 636 engages the body 52 to define a first contact area between the body 52 and the seat 64. The second zone 626 of the circumferential surface 606 is thermally isolated from the body 52 as will be described below. Preferably, the first zone 616 is isolated against thermal conduction from the body 52 by a gap therebetween. Otherwise, the first contact area between the body 52 and the seat 64 is increased by the area of engagement between the first zone 616 and the body 52.

The body 52 includes a retention member 400. Preferably, the retention member is in the form of a crimped section of the neck portion 66 of the body 52 and is disposed at the outlet portion of the body 52. The retention member 400 includes a surface that engages the intermediate zone 636 of the seat 64 to define a first contact area between the body 52 and the

seat 64. The first contact area between the body 52 and the seat 64 substantially allows the conduction of thermal energy between the body 52 and the seat 64.

A seal 200 is disposed between the second zone 626 of the circumferential surface 606 of the seat 64 and the body 52. The seal 200 acts to thermally isolate the seat 64 from the body 52 of the fuel injector assembly 10. The seal 200 may be manufactured from a material that is a substantial thermal insulator. By this arrangement, the seal 200 substantially thermally isolates the second zone 626 of the seat 64 from the body 52. Preferably, the seal 200 comprises polytetrafluoroethylene.

In order to prevent the conduction of thermal energy from the body 52 to the seat 64, it is desirable to substantially minimize the first contact area between the body 52 and the seat 64. By this arrangement, a substantially larger portion of the seat 64 will be substantially thermally isolated from the body 52 by the seal 200. The swirl generator 76 also defines a contact area (second contact area) between the body 52 and the seat 62. Thus, it is desirable to substantially minimize the second contact area between the body 52 and the seat 64. The seal 200 substantially thermally isolates the seat 64 from the body 52 by preventing the conduction of heat from the body 52 to the seat 64.

A method of forming the fuel injector assembly 10 includes the steps of engaging the intermediate zone 636 of the seat 64 with the body 52, and thermally isolating the second zone 626 of the seat 65 from the body 52 by disposing the seal 200 therebetween. The seal 200 is formed of a material that is a substantial thermal insulator. Preferably, the seal comprises polytetrafluoroethylene. The intermediate zone 636 of the seat 64 is retained with a retention member 400 having a surface that engages the intermediate zone 636 of the seat 64 to define a first contact area between the body 52 and the seat 64. Preferably, the retention member is in the form of a crimped section of the neck portion 66 of the body 52 and is disposed at the outlet portion of the body 52. The first contact area between the body 52 and the seat 64 substantially allows the conduction of thermal energy between the body 52 and the seat 64.

While the present invention has been disclosed with reference to certain preferred embodiments, numerous modifications, alterations, and changes to the described

embodiments are possible without departing from the sphere and scope of the present invention, as defined in the appended claims. Accordingly, it is intended that the present invention not be limited to the described embodiments, but that it have the full scope defined by the language of the following claims, and equivalents thereof.

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What is claimed is:

1. A fuel injector having a fuel inlet, a fuel outlet, and a fuel passageway extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet along a longitudinal axis, the fuel injector comprising:

a body having an inlet portion, an outlet portion, and a neck portion disposed between the inlet portion and the outlet portion;

5 an armature adjacent the inlet portion of the body;

a needle operatively connected to the armature;

a seat proximate the needle having a first face, a second face, and a circumferential surface disposed between the first face and the second face, the circumferential surface including a first zone and a second zone that are connected by an intermediate zone, the intermediate zone engaging the body; and

10 a seal disposed between the second zone of the seat and the body that thermally isolates the second zone of the seat from the body.

2. The fuel injector according to claim 1, wherein the body includes a retention member that engages the intermediate zone of the seat.

3. The fuel injector according to claim 2, wherein the retention member includes a surface that engages the intermediate zone of the seat to define a first contact area between the body and the seat.

4. The fuel injector according to claim 3, wherein the retention member comprises a crimped section on the neck portion and is disposed at the outlet portion of the body.

5. The fuel injector according to the claim 1, further comprising:

a swirl generator disk comprising a first surface and a second surface, the first surface of the swirl generator disk adjacent the armature, the second surface of the swirl generator disk adjacent the first face of the seat; and

5 a guide disk comprising a first surface and a second surface, the first surface of the guide disk adjacent the armature, the second surface of the guide disk adjacent the first face of the swirl generator disk.

6. The fuel injector according to claim 5, wherein the swirl generator disk and the guide disk define a second contact area between the body and the seat.

7. The fuel injector according to claim 1, wherein the seal comprises polytetrafluoroethylene.

8. A body and a seat for a fuel injector having a fuel inlet, a fuel outlet, and a fuel passageway extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet along a longitudinal axis, the body and the seat comprising:

a body having an inlet portion, an outlet portion, and a neck portion disposed between the inlet portion and the outlet portion; and

a seat having a first face, a second face, and an circumferential surface disposed between the first face and the second face, the circumferential surface including a first zone and a second zone that are connected by an intermediate zone, the intermediate zone engaging the body and the second zone being thermally isolated from the body.

9. The body and the seat according to claim 8, wherein the body includes a retention member having a surface engaging the intermediate zone of the seat, the surface of the retention member defining a first contact area between the body and the seat.

10. The body and the seat according to claim 9, further comprising:

a swirl generator disk comprising a first surface and a second surface, the first surface of the swirl generator disk adjacent the inlet portion of the body, the second surface of the swirl generator disk adjacent the first face of the seat; and

5 a guide disk comprising a first surface and a second surface, the first surface of the guide disk adjacent the inlet portion of the body, the second surface of the guide disk adjacent the first face of the swirl generator disk.

11. The body and seat according to claim 8, further comprising:

a seal disposed between the second zone of the seat and the body, the seal thermally isolating the seat from the body.

12. A method of forming a fuel injector having a fuel inlet, a fuel outlet, a fuel passageway extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet along a longitudinal axis, a body having an inlet portion, an outlet portion, and a neck portion disposed between the inlet portion and the outlet portion, and a seat having a first face, a second face, and a circumferential surface disposed between the first face and the second face, the circumferential surface including a first zone and a second zone that are connected by an intermediate zone, the method comprising:

engaging the intermediate zone of the seat with the body; and
thermally isolating the second zone of the seat from the body.

13. The method according to claim 12, further comprising:
disposing a seal between the second zone of the seat and the body to thermally isolate the seat from the body.

14. The method according to claim 12, further comprising:
retaining the intermediate zone of the seat and the body with a retention member.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the retention member comprises a surface that engages the intermediate zone of the seat to define a first contact area between the body and the seat.

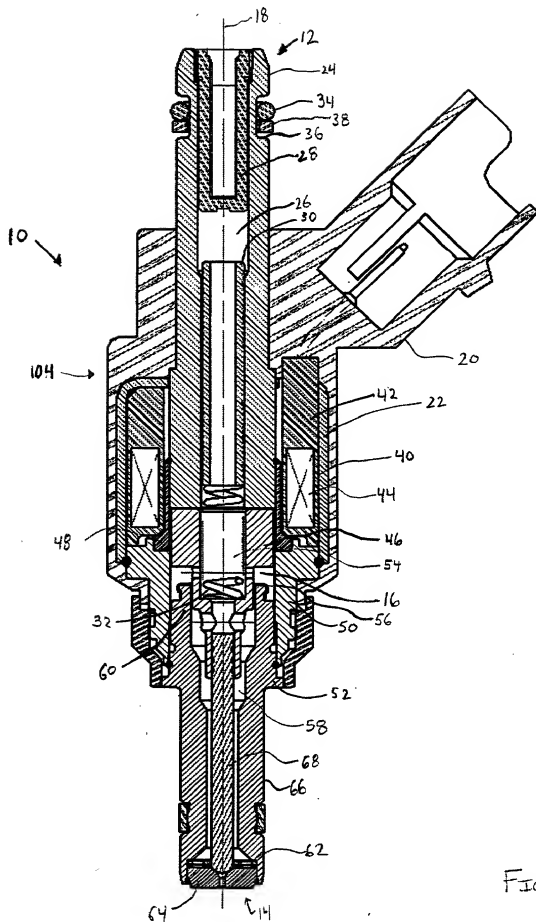
16. The method according to claim 15, wherein the retention member includes a crimped section on the neck portion and is disposed at the outlet portion of the body.

17. The method according to claim 12, wherein the seal comprises polytetrafluoroethylene.

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Abstract of the Disclosure

A body and a seat for a fuel injector having a fuel inlet, a fuel outlet, and a fuel passageway extending from the fuel inlet to the fuel outlet along a longitudinal axis. The body includes an inlet portion, an outlet portion, and a neck portion disposed between the inlet portion and the outlet portion. The seat includes a first face, a second face, and a circumferential surface disposed between the first face and the second face. The circumferential surface includes a first zone and a second zone that are connected by an intermediate zone, the intermediate zone engaging the body and the second zone being thermally isolated from the body. A fuel injector and a method of forming a fuel injector are also disclosed.



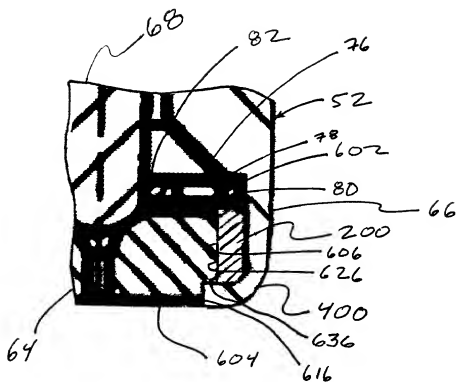


Fig. 2